

TOWN COUNCIL.

REGULAR SESSION OF THE COUNCIL
HELD MONDAY NIGHT.

Members of Council Invited to Attend Truck Company's Banquet.—Bids Opened and Contracts Awarded.—Finance Committee Reports Appropriations.

The Town Council met in regular session Monday night. Charles H. Johnson, Treasurer of Essex Truck Company, on the part of that company, extended to the members of the Council an invitation to attend the twentieth annual banquet of Essex Truck Company to be held in the American House on Tuesday evening, June 9. Mr. Johnson urged the Councilmen to come and enjoy the banquet, and fraternize with old Essex. The invitation was accepted with thanks.

On motion of Councilman Conlan of the Finance Committee the Council authorized the issuing of a town note for \$5,000 in anticipation of taxes.

Councilman Chabot made an earnest plea before the Council for improvement in Brookside Place. Mr. Chabot said that he had personally inspected that street and found it in a deplorable condition. The people there he said paid their full quota of taxes and were justly entitled to consideration from the Council. The street, he said, ought to be graded and provision made for carrying off the surface water from the street. Three incandescent lights, Mr. Chabot said, ought to be placed in the street.

Councilman Peterson in reply to Mr. Chabot, said that the Council fully appreciated the situation at Brookside Place and he discussed it at previous meetings. But the trouble was that the street was not an accepted highway, and according to an ordinance on the town books could not be accepted as long as one end of it remained a "dead end." The thing for the people of Brookside Place to do, Mr. Peterson said, was to take steps towards having the street extended to Grove Street.

Councilman Farrand expressed his sympathy for the house-owners in Brookside Place. He did not agree with Chairman Peterson that a "dead end" prevented the Council from making improvements in the street, and said he could name several other streets that were in the same condition and yet had been improved by the town authorities.

Councilman Walker said that the improvement had been made previous to the passage of the ordinance relating to "dead end" streets.

On motion of Councilman Conlan the matter of making improvements in Brookside Place was referred to the Legal Committee.

Councilman Moore of the Legal Committee made the usual motion postponing action on the Essex Cross Railway franchise application.

The Council voted an appropriation of \$100 to William S. Peterson Post for Memorial Day observance, and fifteen dollars to the Bloomfield Battery for the purpose of firing a salute on that day.

The bond of Town Treasurer Harry L. Osborne was submitted by the clerk and accepted by the Council.

Application was made to the Council for transfer of the license granted to Peter A. Wade to William Johnson. Under the rules the application was held over until next meeting. The residents of Jerome Place petitioned the Council to place several lights in that street.

Town Engineer Gimsted certified to the Council that contractor Martin Callahan had completed the Charles Street sewer, and that contractor John Dorley had completed the grading of Delaware Avenue. The Town Clerk was instructed to issue the usual notice of a hearing for objections in both instances.

The Council authorized Tax Collector Frank Foster to issue a warrant for the sale of property on which taxes of 1901 still remained unpaid.

Contractor Martin Callahan was the only bidder for the work of making house-sewer connections and the contract was awarded to him at a price of \$1250.

Two bids for furnishing broken stone for road repairs were presented. One from Wright & Lindsay asking \$1.75 per gross ton for stone, and the other from Osborne & Marsellis asking \$1.60 per gross ton. On motion of Chairman Conlan of the Road Committee the contract was awarded to the Osborne & Marsellis Company. The price paid for stone is the same as last year.

Chairman Conlan of the Finance Committee submitted the financial budget for the current year. The appropriations named were as follows: Incidental, \$11,000; poor, \$3,000; road repairs, \$10,000; police, \$5,800; water, \$7,500; fire, \$3,500; bond and interest, \$21,000; schools, \$37,500; street lighting, \$10,000.

Councilman Farrand in commenting

on the appropriations named asked that the adoption of the Finance Committee's report be laid over until the next meeting as he wanted time to study it over. There was some matter in connection with the fire department he said, that would have to be considered in connection with the fire appropriation. One of them was the need of several miles of new fire alarm wire.

Councilman Conlan said that the only objection he had to deferring action on the appropriation was the bad condition of the roads. Some of the streets were going to ruin.

Councilman Moore said he was not prepared to act on the appropriation at the present time, and asked to have action deferred. Both Mr. Moore and Mr. Farrand said there was no objection to the Road Committee beginning work at once wherever it was most needed, and there was no doubt at all but the Council would sanction such action. It was finally decided to postpone action on the appropriation until the next meeting of the Council.

After discussing some tax matters submitted by the Finance Committee at the request of the Board of Assessors, the Council held an executive session, and again met in open session and appointed Samuel J. MacDonald as Associate Counsel with Town Attorney Halfpenny in the Belleville Avenue storm sewer case. The Council adjourned to meet Monday night.

THE WATER PROBLEM.

THE TOWN COUNCIL WILL CALL A PUBLIC MEETING

To Take Action on an Option Offered to the Town by the Orange Water Company for that Company's Plant and Business Rights.—The Price Asked is One Hundred and Fifty Thousand Dollars.—The Option Expires on June 23 and There Are Other Bidders.

The Orange Water Company has given this town an option on the company's plant and business rights in this town. The price asked is \$150,000, and the option expires on the twenty-third day of June next.

The Water Committee, of which Dr. W. F. Harrison is chairman, will introduce a resolution at a meeting of the Town Council Monday night, calling for a public meeting of citizens for the purpose of discussing the advisability of accepting the offer of the water company. If the majority sentiment of the meeting is in favor of such action the Town Council will call a special election at which the question of purchase will be voted on at the polls. In the event of the town refusing to buy the plant the company has offers for it from the East Jersey Water Company, the West Summit Water Company, and a private combination of yet legally organized and in which several residents of the town are interested.

The Water Committee of Glen Ridge Borough has expressed a desire to cooperate with our town in any action taken with respect to a water supply both in the purchase of the plant and securing a source of supply.

In the event of the town's accepting the Orange Water Company's offer that company will continue to supply water at present rates until the town can make arrangements for another source of supply.

The Water Committee of the Council has been authorized to carry out some experimental work within the town limits for the purpose of testing the quality and quantity of some alleged local supplies.

A well-known resident of the town, who is familiar with the water question, says that the price asked by the Orange Water Company for its plant considered on a mileage basis is less than what the company got per mile from the city of East Orange for its plant in that city, even after the expensive appraisal made at the cost to the city. The same person also is of the opinion that any other private corporation succeeding to the Orange Water Company's business here will want a higher price for the water furnished. The East Jersey Company may be an exception but that company furnishes Passaic River water.

When the Orange Water Company offered to sell out to the city of East Orange it was realized that a crisis was near at hand with respect to the water question here. The critical period has arrived and the people now have an important problem thrust upon them to decide. The people are face to face with the problem of municipal ownership. East Orange and Summit have recently adopted that policy and the tendency of the times is in that direction.

In so far as the plant of the Orange Water Company is concerned some of the pipes may be small and more of them old, but when hydrants, house-connections and all things are considered the plant cannot be probably duplicated for less than the price named.

Bonds and Interest.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE CITIZEN:

SIR: If the taxing property-owners of Essex County, instead of berating the Board of Freeholders for the increase in county taxes, will carefully study the causes that have led up to the increase, it will perhaps result in some beneficial reflection. It is obvious that a large factor in county expenses is bonds and interest, and the people have directly and indirectly authorized the issuance of interest-bearing bonds.

The immense volume of county park bonds is the result of the sanction of the people through the medium of popular vote, and it is never was a case of such thoughtlessness, ignorance, and carelessness as was manifested by the people of this county in the vote on the park bonds. Thousands of voters refused to vote either for or against the park bonds. Some of the voters deposited their lots without any indication of whether they were voting for or against the issuing of bonds. The total vote both for and against bonds was small, and evidenced an indifference on the part of the people to the issue involved. The same charge of neglect and indifference applies against the people in other county bond issues. It is now against the high taxes that are the result of the incompetency of taxpayers to avoid by an intelligent exercise of their power at the proper time. There is no easier method of obtaining public improvements than by the medium of bonds and interest, and at the same time it is the most costly method.

What is true of the causes of high county taxation is also true of high local taxation. Bonds and interest are now a considerable item in the local tax budget, and if rumor is true the bond and interest item of taxation is far more likely to be increased than decreased. Even so conservative a paper as the CITIZEN, in the issue of May 16, gave utterance to sentiments that justified the conclusion that that paper advocated municipal ownership of the local water supply system. The writer of this present article has yet to find a case where proper business principles were applied to the operation of any public convenience that was owned, controlled, and operated by any town, county, or State government, and if the CITIZEN can point out, the writer will feel under obligation to it. I imagine the editor's index finger will point straight to Madison, Morris County, as one instance, and to the United States postal service as another, but the facts are that from a business standpoint of economical management both are failures.

But to return to the subject of bonds and interest. The people of Bloomfield can issue bonds and purchase a water plant, but the cost does not stop there. Not long since the people voted a large issue of bonds for street improvements. The bonds and interest were of themselves quite a burden, but the miles of stone road that resulted from the proceeds is going to prove a much greater burden. The local government is expected to keep the roads in good order, and unless more money is furnished in the future than has been done in the past much of the stone road constructed from the bond issue will be destroyed. The fault is not that of the government, but is the result of conditions with which the government has to contend. Twenty thousand dollars is needed for road repairs this year, but to appropriate such a sum would mean a tax rate that would appal the people. Yet as a matter of fact nothing is being saved by neglect of the roads in order to keep down the tax rate.

Bonds and interest made it easy to get the stone roads, but bonds and interest did not provide for keeping the roads in repair. When the people authorized a large issue of bonds for street improvements they also forced a new condition of things upon the local government. The large sum that has to be paid out annually for interest on road bonds does not purchase one pound of broken stone for road repairs, and any government that is compelled to meet large payments for stoking fund and interest purposes cannot be criticized for high taxes resulting from its administration of affairs.

It will also be easy to acquire a water plant by means of bonds and interest, but the creation of new conditions will follow the purchase. A water department will have to be established and maintained as a branch of the local government, and the question is, can it not be conducted along the same economic lines that a private individual or a company would conduct it? There is no satisfied official under any government that deems it incumbent upon himself to render the same diligent and exacting service that would be rendered in private employment, and this condition is the fatal weakness of municipal ownership, and before the people of Bloomfield enlarge their burden of taxation by the easy process of bonds and interest, they should carefully consider the future consequences of such action.

J. P. M.

SATURDAY, MAY 23, 1903.

County Expenditures.

In any criticism of the increased county tax rate due consideration must be given to a class of expenditures over which the Board of Freeholders has no discretion either in decreasing or increasing. Such expenditures are in the class called authorized expenditures, and are represented by the county parks, the new court-house, the speed-way, the isolation hospital, and other expenditures that the Board of Freeholders has been directed either by vote of the people or by legislative enactment to meet and provide for in the county tax levy. The above specified items represent large expenditures.

A decision of the courts imposes the custody and maintenance of the highway between Newark and Jersey City known as the Plank Road upon the Boards of Freeholders of Essex and Hudson County. Newark being the beneficiary from its wagon route to New York, the large share of the cost rightly falls on Essex County. The city of Newark in this instance is reaping a financial advantage at the expense of the people of the county. It must be remembered that for the thousands of dollars expended in the county towards outside of Newark for roads improved under the State Aid Road Act, Newark has paid the larger share of the cost to the county for such work, notwithstanding that the benefit was chiefly made to the town in which the work was done. Newark is entitled to reciprocal treatment from the balance of the county by having the Plank Road improved at county expense.

A presentation on the part of the Grand Jury of the wasted condition of the old county jail has caused the Board of Freeholders to make an appropriation for an enlargement and improvement of the jail. The proper care of the patients in the county hospital, for the care of the insane, also compelled an appropriation for an enlargement of the county institution at Verona.

In the ordinary annual expenditures of the Board of Freeholders there is no increase beyond a proper percentage consistent with the increase of population and the development of the county.

Found a Water Supply.

Judging from the result of recent experiments by C. C. Vermeule, the civil engineer, who has been testing sites for a new water supply for East Orange, a new water supply in possession of a supply from an independent source. The site selected is in the valley west of the Second Mountain at a ridge on the farm of Samuel Pearson, about three miles north of Madison. Here a six-inch artesian well has been put down 125 feet, from which the water is now flowing at the rate of one gallon a minute. It is estimated that there is a supply in the vicinity sufficient to furnish 10,000,000 gallons daily, if necessary.

On Thursday last East Orange City Council, W. H. V. Reiser, the City Engineer, Philmore W. Druff, City Councilman, L. H. M. Farnett, Superintendent of the Water Department of East Orange, and J. Connelly, who has been engaged with C. Vermeule, visited the site where the tests have been made, and all were satisfied with the results.

Options have already been secured on the necessary property, and it is expected to begin operations toward the building of the pipe line as soon as arrangements can be made. A reservoir will also be built in which the water will be stored as taken from the wells.

Mr. Vermeule was engaged last December by the City Council to obtain, if possible, an independent supply of water for the city. He made several borings at Singac, near the Greenwood Lake Railroad, and for a long time it was thought that the ideal place had been found there. It was estimated that it would cost about \$350,000 to bring the water down to East Orange. Later it was found that the supply would be inadequate.

At present the city is receiving its support of water from the wells of the Orange Water Company and from the city of Newark, the average daily consumption being 3,000,000 gallons.

Franchise Granted.

Elizabeth's Board of Aldermen, by a vote of 14 to 8, finally granted to the Essex Cross Street Railway Company the franchise to construct its line through Union Avenue and Union Street and Grand Street to a heart of the business section. Elizabeth. This is the ordinance which was defeated at a previous meeting of the board, but since then a powerful influence have been at work to get the Aldermen to grant the privilege. A motion offered by Alderman Higgins that the company, in addition to all the other concessions it had made, should pay \$1,000 additional for the franchise, was beaten. No change was made in the agreement previously reached between the railroad company and the city authorities.

The Public Service Corporation.

The Public Service Corporation, the title by which the company will be known that is now being organized out of a merger of the trolley lines and gas and electric light and power companies in this State, is making progress in its preliminary work.

The time for deposit of the trolley stocks with the Fidelity Trust Company under the merger plan has been extended until to-day. This will be the final extension. As soon as the gas leases have been approved the stock of the new company will be issued and the subscription books opened for the pro-rata distribution of the \$8,000,000 of new stock allotted to stockholders.

President Uzal H. McCarter of the Fidelity Trust Company said that the deposits of stock under the merger had been very satisfactory. Over 92 per cent of the stock had been deposited up to the last Saturday and additional deposits have been made this week.

"We desire to give every stockholder an opportunity to take advantage of our offer," said Mr. McCarter, "and so it has been determined to grant another extension of time to next Saturday, but after that stockholders will forfeit their right to subscribe to the new stock."

It is expected that the certificates issued in exchange for the stock will be ready for distribution, so that they can be issued, and the 1 per cent due on them paid to the holders on June 1. Subscription for new stock will be opened about the same time. It is expected that there will be considerable demand for the new stock.

The distribution of the \$8,000,000 of stock will be pro-rata to the certificate-holders and to the stockholders of the various gas companies included in the consolidation. Former holders of 100 shares of the trolley and United Electric stocks will be entitled to shares in the new company as follows: North Jersey, six and two-third shares; White Line, five and seven-eighth shares; United Electric and other trolley roads, five shares.

There is little doubt but that the lease of the Essex and Hudson Gas Company and the other gas companies will be approved. A majority of the stock of each is held by the United Gas Improvement Company of Philadelphia, and this will be voted in favor of the lease.

The terms of the lease provide for three and one-half per cent interest on Essex and Hudson stock this year, four per cent next year, and an increase of one per cent each year thereafter until eight per cent is reached, when the rate will be fixed at that amount.

Before the State Board.

The State Board of Taxation at a meeting held in Newark Thursday took up the appeals of the Diamond Paper Mills Company, and John Hyde, from the assessment levied on their respective properties by the local Board of Assessors. The Diamond Paper Mills Company's property was formerly assessed at \$20,000. The mill has been much enlarged and improved since that time and the company's houses improved, and the assessment was fixed at \$30,000.

The State Board reduced the assessment to \$25,000 on the real property. The company's value on \$2,300 personal property assessment.

In John Hyde's case the assessment on Mr. Hyde's farm in Brookdale was reduced from \$6,000 to \$5,000.

The State Board adjusted the assessment on Samuel Dodd's property in Olive Street, as recommended by the local Board of Assessors.

